United Nations S/2015/693

Security Council

Distr.: General
9 September 2015

Original: English

Letter dated 9 September 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I am writing, in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, to report to the Security Council that Australia is taking measures against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in Syria in support of the collective self-defence of Iraq as part of international efforts led by the United States.

On 20 September 2014, the Government of Iraq wrote to inform the Security Council that ISIL had established safe havens outside Iraq's borders in Syria and that ISIL attacks emanating from these positions posed a direct threat to the security of the Iraqi people and territory (see S/2014/691, annex). The Government of Iraq requested that the United States lead international efforts to strike ISIL sites and military strongholds in Syria in order to end the constant attacks on Iraq, to protect Iraqi citizens and, ultimately, to enable Iraqi forces to regain control of Iraq's borders.

This threat to Iraq, its territorial integrity and its citizens persists. Attacks by ISIL in Iraq from safe havens in Syria continue.

Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations recognizes the inherent right of States to act in individual or collective self-defence where an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations. States must be able to act in self-defence when the Government of the State where the threat is located is unwilling or unable to prevent attacks originating from its territory. The Government of Syria has, by its failure to constrain attacks upon Iraqi territory originating from ISIL bases within Syria, demonstrated that it is unwilling or unable to prevent those attacks.

In response to the request for assistance by the Government of Iraq, Australia is therefore undertaking necessary and proportionate military operations against ISIL in Syria in the exercise of the collective self-defence of Iraq.

These operations are not directed against Syria or the Syrian people, nor do they entail support for the Syrian regime. When undertaking such military operations, Australia will abide by its obligations under international law.

I request that you have the text of the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Gillian **Bird**

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